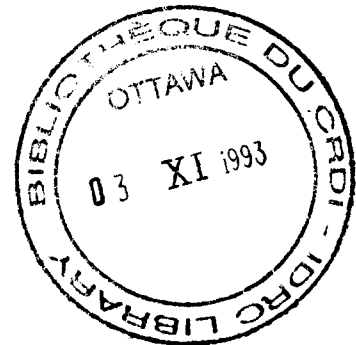


EVALUATIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD NATIONAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS:
SOME TRENDS AND OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCES

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Office of Planning and Evaluation
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**EVALUATIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD NATIONAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS :
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* The authors hold positions of Planning Officer and Director respectively. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and they do not necessarily represent the views of the Centre. Prepared for presentation in "Symposium on the Evaluation of International Development Projects : Canadian Experiences." Joint Conference of the Evaluation Research Society, the Evaluation Network, and the Canadian Evaluation Society, Toronto, October 17-19, 1985.

INTRODUCTION

Interest in the potential value of evaluation as an aspect of research management is growing in the Third World. In view of the limited amount of resources in the South, the interest to monitor and capitalize on investments in research has generated attention towards utilizing evaluation as a guide for resource allocation, and for assessing the quality and impact of research programs. With the current economic crisis leading to a shrinkage of economic resources in parts of the South, there is added pressure on Third World managers to improve research management and to increase the productivity of research programs. Therefore, evaluations are viewed as possible tools that can be used in budget dialogues on program priorities. Donor agencies have also promoted evaluations of donor supported development research projects in the Third World. Among the donor agencies themselves, there has been an active interest to conduct meta-evaluations and to derive from these activities lessons learnt that can be fed back into program activities. Thus, evaluations are increasingly becoming a topical issue for discussion, and for inclusion in donor supported activities.

With this growing interest, it is appropriate for us to review and assess some of the current trends in evaluation activities in the Third World. Furthermore, we propose as well, to review some of our own agency's work in the evaluation of its funded projects, and our attempts to foster and support evaluation activities in the Third World. The paper is divided into two sections. Section one presents some of our perceptions and views of evaluation activities in the Third World. The second section examines some of our work in the Office of Planning and Evaluation, IDRC. It discusses some aspects of our operational experiences in evaluation and our attempts to meet the needs of IDRC and the Third World.

I

SOME CURRENT TRENDS OF RESEARCH EVALUATION ACTIVITIES IN THE THIRD WORLD

Current Conditions

Tracking some of the current trends in the level of evaluation activities and the status of evaluation systems in the Third World is not an easy task because of the lack of documented information in this area.* There are however, some sporadic documents and events that can act as guideposts for us to project some qualitative trends in evaluation activities in the South. In comparison to the state of planning activities and planning systems undertaken by Third World national governments, evaluation of development projects and evaluation systems are not as well developed or endowed. Forde and Sohm (1982:7) in their brief review of evaluation efforts by Third World governments, have expressed the view that evaluation as a development tool "has not had high visibility" in the past, and national governments "have not often been willing to commit modest resources to evaluation development". Of course, there are exceptions, India, with the assistance of the Ford Foundation, for example, has had an established Programme Evaluation Organization located in its Planning Commission since October 1952 (Programme Evaluation Organization, 1981:2). And since then, evaluation of development programs in India have been evolving at both the Central and State levels with a corpus of 870 professional evaluators (Shah, 1984:118-120). With the exception of some of the better endowed Third World countries, evaluation of development programs has not received a high priority in the 1960s (Forde & Sohm, 1982:65). In fact, a 1965 survey of the United Nations system's projects (for implementation in 1963/64) showed that only 14% of the 70 Third World countries surveyed had conducted systematic evaluations (status reviews) of the projects and 55% of the countries had not undertaken any evaluations at all (Forde and Sohm 1982:6).

* Evaluation in this paper is defined as reviews and assessments of a set of activities in relation to the adequacy of objectives, design and results. It can include front-end analysis, monitoring, impact analysis and ex post assessments.

We believe, however, that even though efforts in evaluating development programs have been slow and sporadic in the past, there are some indications that there is an increasing interest in evaluations in the Third World. This interest is reflected for example, in a recent UNDP publication (Directory of Central Evaluation Authorities, 1984), showing a large number (92) of the Third World nations having a central evaluation authority designated for development programs. The level and extent to which these central evaluation units undertake evaluation of development programs are unclear. From the description provided, there are 14 countries with central evaluation units that conduct and sponsor evaluation of development programs at both the national and sectoral levels. However, on the whole, the information tends to suggest that the majority of these central evaluation units are mostly functioning as reviewers of prospective development projects/programs with perhaps a monitoring function (status reviews) attached. Even though there is this growing interest in evaluations, and in the establishment of evaluation units in the Third World, the level of activities in our view, is not as high as in the North. For example in Canada, since 31st March 1979, the Government of Canada has completed over 300 evaluation studies and has established an evaluation infrastructure in 43 federal departments and crown agencies (Comptroller General of Canada, 1984:9). The expenditures for these activities (excluding salaries) have been increasing from a total of CAD 4.5M in FY 1979/80 to CAD 14.5M for FY 1984/85. If salaries of evaluation personnel were included this total shifts from about CAD 9M to CAD 30M. To date, 17% of program components of the Federal Government has been evaluated representing "almost a quarter of program expenditures" (Comptroller General of Canada, 1984:11). Growth in evaluation personnel has almost doubled for the same period from 155 person-years (authorized) to 341 person-years (authorized).¹ Clearly, therefore, with the exception of India and perhaps a few other Third World nations, the North has been more active in establishing evaluation systems and conducting evaluation activities. This will be substantiated further in the following paragraph.

¹ We would like to thank Alain Barbarie, Senior Evaluation Policy Officer, Programme Evaluation Branch, Policy Division, Treasury Board, for the provision of these figures.

The growing interest in evaluations in the Third World has also been fuelled by donor agencies with interests to initiate and encourage evaluation activities of donor funded projects/programs.² On the part of the donors, they themselves have undertaken evaluations of their own programs/projects in the South. The recent report on aid effectiveness of the World Bank/IMF Task Force on Concessional Flows (The Cassen Report) has indicated an impressive amount of evaluation material produced by aid agencies. The level of donor sponsored evaluations is quite high. A report of the Development Assistance Committee's Evaluation Correspondent's Group of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in its review of evaluation by aid donors, cited about three hundred evaluation reports on six areas of major concern to eight members of the Evaluation Group.

This overall trend towards an increased interest in evaluations can also be seen in the evaluations of programs and projects concentrating on research activities. The World Bank and other external agencies have been a **factor** in this recent increase in interest to evaluate development research. The Bank and other external agencies demand that an adequate monitoring and evaluation component be built into activities they support. For example, evaluations of agricultural research sponsored by the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute of Malaysia (MARDI), and the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development of Indonesia (AARD) have been undertaken in connection with World Bank loans.

Besides this, other **factors** such as interest to improve and streamline research management has prompted some Third World research institutions to develop evaluation units and evaluation plans. The depressed state of economies in the Third World has also generated interest to undertake evaluation of research programs for resource allocation and impact assessment. We do not foresee that this **factor** will be of a sustained influence in the long term. However, in the

² We have tried to allude to some of the reasons for this increased interest on the donor's part to undertake and sponsor evaluations and the high volume of activities that have taken place. See (Daniels and Chew, 1985: 3-4)

short and medium terms, this interest to evaluate research programs to assess the resources invested appears to be quite strong. This is especially so for Third World research agencies located in countries with depressed economies that have to compete for scarce and diminishing funds, and whose activities are invariably long term and most often with few products to show for their efforts.

The external donors funding development research have also been undertaking evaluations of their programs. One of the major initiatives at the moment is one of the most comprehensive impact assessments in excess of US 1M dollars undertaken by the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Among the donors specializing in supporting development research there is increasing interest and initiatives to undertake evaluations of their programs.

The Future

In view of these currents of interest in evaluation, we foresee for the future an increase in evaluation activities undertaken by Third World governments and donor agencies in assessing research systems and programs. We base these remarks on several conditions that will continue to foster the growth of evaluations.

1. The pressure on external donors to show the effectiveness of aid funds will continue in the foreseeable future due to the economic situation, thus prompting donors to sponsor evaluations of their programs. Or as Robert Berg (1984:127) has stated "we are one of the few occupations [evaluators] which thrives in times of economic depression when parliaments are desperate for information to justify programmes, particularly such traditionally controversial programmes as international assistance."
2. There will also be continued pressure on donors to increase and improve program efficiency and effectiveness which will mean further establishment of evaluation activities and components in the programs they fund.

3. Furthermore, we foresee a spread effect whereby interest in evaluation by some donors will prompt others to follow or collaborate in evaluation activities.

These remarks we believe are also applicable for evaluation activities of development programs. With the existence of 34 bilateral and 60 multilateral agencies and a further 745 voluntary aid institutions, it represents a considerable body of development oriented evaluation.

The aforementioned conditions will impact on Third World governments by encouraging them to undertake jointly sponsored donor initiated evaluations. **In addition, the interest to improve research program management on the part of Third World managers will also encourage an increased activity in the area of evaluation.** The potential value and need for evaluation is likely to grow as national research systems become larger and more complex. The ability of senior Third World research managers to monitor and allocate resources to a growing number of programs is bound to become more tenuous with the development of more complex interrelationships, such as, for example, those in agricultural research between research on commodities and on farming systems programs. Pressures to improve efficiency of research are likely to increase since real financial resources per scientist have been declining in a number of countries although the total number of scientists continues to increase. The increased resources utilized and the growing visibility of national research systems is likely to lead to increased demands on research programs to demonstrate positive returns.

This projected increase in evaluation activities to us is healthy. However, we do have some concerns especially if there is to be a further increase in evaluations by Third World governments initiated by external donor agencies. As these evaluations are externally sponsored and initiated, they invariably are designed to meet the needs of the donors. Therefore, these evaluations might not likely be as beneficial, or may even have a negative impact on national research

programs, if they do not serve or fit within specific national evaluation requirements and processes. Because the evaluation function in the South is still fragile, such initiatives might lead to the establishment of processes and activities that in the long run would be counterproductive to both donors and national government needs. Inspectors of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations, and others have also raised some issues that might be useful for discussion. Robert Berg of the Overseas Development Council (1984:127) has called for donors to subordinate their evaluation agendas to the wishes of the South. He suggests that donors will need to curtail frequent and uncoordinated calls for national and sectoral data in order to minimize the information that the Third World governments are called upon to provide. For example, he cites the case of one country noted for its cooperation with donors whereby the government "employs more enumerators per 100,000 population than they do agricultural extension agents or rural health workers" (Berg, 1984:127). Along the same vein, Forde and Sohm of the Joint Inspection Unit (1982:8) have also expressed the heavy operational workloads imposed on Third World governments where, for example, a large complex evaluation project with ambitious data gathering plans would absorb 100 local monitoring and evaluation staff. Though this number might be modest to donor agencies, it could according to Forde and Sohm (1982:8) divert "scarce skilled development managers and staff away from other equally urgent national needs." Besides these issues, there are changes that might be considered, such as involving the local national staff in all aspects of evaluation activities instead of focussing their involvement only in logistic arrangements and perhaps a review discussion. The latter will invariably lead to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Third World national staff and adds to the image that evaluations are externally imposed and conducted by independent expert missions from abroad. Evaluations thus could be seen as a "necessary pill" for Third World recipients "to swallow along with the inflow of external assistance" (Forde & Sohm, 1982:7).

In view of these issues raised, there is a need therefore to increase the evaluation skills and capacities of Third World national staff members. Most often we notice that this human resource development is not pursued in a concerted manner with the level of evaluation activities undertaken. As we have indicated above, most evaluations conducted in the South that are donor supported tend to use expatriates. There is however, a growing tendency to have joint teams. But, if evaluations are to meet the needs of the Third World, it is important to develop the Third World human resources to meet the upcoming growth of activities. The utilization of local resources will enhance the type of activities undertaken, especially where knowledge of local conditions is very important for a successful conduct of an evaluation exercise, such as, an impact analysis. The utilization of local resources could also help to adapt some evaluation approaches to local systems, values, and traditions. **The trend we foresee is that evaluation activities will continue to grow, however the concomitant increase in Third World personnel trained in evaluation skills will not be keeping pace.** In our view, these diverging growth tendencies need to be addressed by both Third World governments and external donors.

So far we have tried to map some of the current trends in evaluation activities in the Third World, to further the analysis of these trends perhaps it will be useful to review briefly some of the current concrete activities in evaluating research programs and systems in the South.

**CURRENT RESEARCH EVALUATION ACTIVITIES : AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
EVALUATIONS IN SOUTH AND
SOUTH EAST ASIA.**

Some of the most active initiatives in evaluating research programs and research systems in the Third World are occurring in the agricultural sector. Basically, there are two reasons for this. First, agricultural research in nearly all Third World countries is the largest research sector, and in some cases represents half of all research in the country. Secondly, it has received the most external development assistance, which often contains an evaluation component.

The level of priority assigned to evaluating national research programs in most Third World countries is unclear as there appears to be no formally established evaluation policy or strategy. Program managers often cite the role of evaluation as providing information for managements to increase the effectiveness and impact of funds allocated (Sadikin, 1984), while others frankly acknowledge the impetus provided by external donor agency requirements (Nestel, 1984:1, Abdullah, 1984:5). Clearly, therefore, the trends in evaluations in the Third World that we have delineated in the previous pages are reflected in these concrete instances.

It seems to us that evaluation activities in South and South East Asia (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia) in the agricultural sector tend to focus more on the ex ante and monitoring stages.³ The concentration in these types of evaluation activities in our view, underscores the interest of the research managers to utilize evaluation for management purposes. National research managers cite such ex ante assessments and monitoring activities as important processes which provide information for their planning activities and indicators of whether funded activities are in accord with development

³ The information for this section is derived from presentations given by agricultural research managers at a Regional Workshop on Research Program Evaluation held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Oct. 1-3 1984.

and research goals. However, we do not know to what extent this information is fed back into the system to ensure that the information is used. Some positive indicators however do exist. In Indonesia, senior managers of research programs and institutes participate in these assessment activities and hence, we believe, are more likely to utilize the results because of their involvement. Another development that may increase utilization is the centralizing of responsibility for most of the agricultural research in a country within an institution, especially if the institution is also given an evaluation mandate. One can witness this for example, in Bangladesh (Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council), Pakistan (Pakistan Agricultural Research Council), Indonesia (Agency for Agricultural Research and Development), and in the Philippines (Philippines Council for Agriculture and Resources Research and Development).

Besides these ex ante assessment and monitoring activities, increasing attention is being given to evaluating the impact of agricultural research. These studies according to one senior national manager, will "improve our planning and implementation of agricultural and rural development projects even though they are difficult to measure." Elements of these impact evaluations can be found in the activities of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (Internal Project Reviews), Indonesia's Agency for Agricultural Research and Development, and Malaysia's Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute. In the latter's case, the activities are sponsored in connection with World Bank loans obtained by Malaysia for agricultural research.

Indonesia provides a good example of one country where evaluation is formally built into the national research program of the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development (AARD). At AARD, evaluation activities and reviews occur at several levels. These reviews range from the commodity level to the level of institutional reviews. With external donor assistance to agricultural research amounting to over 100 million dollars over the past ten years, there is increasing interest on

the part of donors and the Government of Indonesia to assess the impact of these programs. Systemwide reviews are being undertaken at assessing the structure and organization of research, the scientific and technical activities, and also the impact of the research. The level and amount of resources expended for evaluations, are we believe, commensurate with those in many industrial countries. Indonesia, however, is an exceptional case whereby the level of research evaluation activities is extremely high. The other selected case would be India where evaluation of agricultural research is quite formalized. Besides these two cases, the rest of the other countries in South and South East Asia are increasingly indicating signs of interest to undertake agricultural research evaluations. At a regional workshop in Singapore in 1983, cosponsored by the Philippines Council for Agriculture and Resources Research and Development, and the International Development Research Centre, senior ASEAN research managers at the Workshop expressed a need to assess the state of evaluations in their respective countries and to develop national systems that will meet their needs.⁴

⁴ A global workshop on the review of the state and level of evaluation activities in the Third World is being planned for 1986 to be sponsored by the International Federation of Agricultural Research Directors and the Office of Planning and Evaluation, IDRC. Ten nations are preparing reviews for presentation. Following this workshop we will have a much better idea of the state of evaluation in some parts of the Third World.

II

OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND THE RESPONSE OF IDRC

To meet the needs of IDRC and those of the Third World, the Office of Planning and Evaluation has adopted and established over the years, a series of processes, activities and components of an evaluation system. For this section, we will not review in detail the evaluation system of IDRC, as it has been discussed elsewhere (See Hardie, Chew, and Daniels, 1984). Rather, we propose to review briefly some of our operational experiences in relation to evaluation methodologies, the utilization of evaluation findings, and the division's attempt to support and build evaluation capacity in the Third World.

Most of the evaluation activities⁵ undertaken by the Office of Planning and Evaluation are targeted directly to meet IDRC Management needs. **Therefore, evaluations at the Centre are used for better resource allocation, and for the development of more effective project/program management.** This means that there is an emphasis on the relevance and the utilization of the findings of evaluations, and that evaluation studies are undertaken to guide Centre program management. At the operational level, this emphasis is translated into certain processes and components.

⁵ Evaluations conducted to date by the Division have included both project to program level evaluations. They have also included sector specific and geographic (country, or region) focus evaluations. These activities have focussed on assessing the effectiveness of IDRC programs/projects with some covering the social impacts of IDRC projects/programs.

Utilization of Evaluations

Organizationally, planning and evaluation at IDRC is combined under the functions of one responsibility centre : the Office of Planning and Evaluation (OPE). This means that evaluation findings can be fed back into policy analysis and discussion, since there is no delineation and institutionalization of the two functions into separate responsibility centres. Conventionally, in an organization the evaluation function is located as a separate responsibility centre. For us this separation engenders the "delineation of evaluation as a separate field of specialization" thus incurring "the inevitable cost of creating barriers between it and the rest of the world, including those who should be the main beneficiaries and users of evaluation information" (Hardie, Chew & Daniels, 1984:2). Therefore, such a separation would hinder the feedback of evaluation findings into policy discussion, and thus possibly reducing the level of utilization of evaluations.

To facilitate further the utilization of evaluation findings for management purposes, the Division places emphases on both the evaluation process⁶ and the quality of the final product. The former entails having the user define the parameters of the evaluations through a dialogue process, and throughout the conduct of the evaluation, the user is informed and included in the progress of the evaluation. Specific stages are flagged to ensure that the user is aware of the progress of the evaluation and the user's concerns are constantly addressed and discussed. In our view, the user's involvement is crucial to ensuring the utilization of the evaluation findings. For the latter, the evaluation product, the Division is increasingly conscious to improve the quality of the evaluation report and has been experimenting with different methodologies to increase the rigor of the product.

⁶ A set of evaluation procedures have been established to ensure that the user and the evaluation process is given as much weight as the evaluation product.

Besides the utilization of findings from specific evaluations for program management, we are increasingly concerned that lessons learnt from specific evaluations have not been generalized for use in corporate and program management. Often, it has been the result of being unaware of the availability of evaluation reports, and the fact that in most large organizations burdened with an accumulation of paper, it has not been possible to assess and to generalize those findings. These "lessons learnt" will be useful and beneficial for the management of new projects and for staff that are widely dispersed and who are not (readily) centrally directed. To further increase the utilization of findings from evaluations, OPE is testing a computerized corporate memory that contains all findings of our evaluations with a short précis of "lessons learnt". Included also in this database are existing Centre policy guidelines to enable staff to consider Centre policies in their program management. It is important also to realize that for the system to be useful, evaluations undertaken should have a coordinated and consistent approach, thus making it possible to derive a set of useful cumulative experiences. Along the same vein, the World Bank/IMF Task Force on Concessional Flows has also in their review of aid effectiveness suggested the development of databanks on evaluations within donor agencies and between donor agencies in order to increase the feedback of evaluation findings to program managers.

Evaluation Methodology

To date methodologies for evaluating research programs have been derived mainly from those used to assess the progress of science or to evaluate the quality of the scientific proposal. These have ranged from citation index searches to expert peer reviews. In the field of the economic evaluation of agricultural research, the methods used have been overwhelmingly focussed on consumer surplus and production function approaches⁷ (Bengston, 1985:246). For us however, there are few

⁷ It is interesting to note that there has been a cumulative growth in these economic evaluation studies over the period 1960-1980. To date 87 studies have been identified and the marked increase has been over the decade of the 1970s (Bengston, 1985:246).

methodologies or advances in them to evaluate aspects of development research (such as capacity building) so that measures can be used to assess individual and institutional development. Operationally, we face some methodological issues when defined concepts are translated for measurements. Because there are no agreements on concept definition, it makes it quite difficult to undertake "meta-evaluations" of evaluation reports for a comparative analysis of findings for consistency and reliability.

Invariably, a lot of research that needs evaluation tends to focus on highly technical questions at the frontiers of knowledge. The tendency from our experiences has been to use technical specialists rather than evaluation specialists. Our concern is that such technical specialists most often focus their assessment on the appropriateness of the research to achieve the stated objectives rather than perhaps questioning some of the basic issues surrounding the research, and the cost effectiveness of such activities to meet developmental goals, such as institutional and human resource development. In other words, we are concerned that technical specialists tend to take the research activity as given (ontological) instead of questioning the "givenness" of the research itself.

Operationally, our methodological experience suggests that simple approaches are the best. With sparse amount of baseline information available in the Third World, and where local consultants are not familiar with sophisticated methodologies, we find that it is difficult to undertake sophisticated data gathering techniques. Also, advanced techniques such as economic analysis of rates of return, which is usually information intensive, fails to provide decision-makers with guidance for resource allocation decisions. There is no indication that sophisticated modelling would give better results, and especially with the lack of available data in the third World to test the model, rigorous models very often do not meet expectations. Having stated this, it does not mean that we do not stress the importance of developing a logical and rigorous evaluation design. **In fact, we believe that qualitative evaluative information should be at all times, if possible, complemented with quantitative data.** In our operational

experiences we have often opted for a triangulation of "hard" and "soft" methodologies to evaluate our programs.

SUPPORT AND BUILDING EVALUATION CAPACITIES IN THE THIRD WORLD

One of the thrusts of the Division's work in the field of evaluation has been to support initiatives by Third World governments and personnel to conduct evaluation and establish evaluation systems. In terms of the concerns we have raised in the first section of the paper on providing opportunities for Third World governments and nationals to define their own evaluation needs, this aspect of the Division's work has been directed towards achieving these ends. The division has a very modest program to allow Third World professionals to design and undertake evaluations of programs and to build national evaluation capacity. The intent is to provide an opportunity for these professionals to develop their evaluation systems according to **their perceptions** of national needs. The Division also complements this intention with the use of Third World evaluators for evaluations primarily designed to meet Centre needs. This also dramatically reduces the costs of such evaluations, and increases the opportunities to develop local expertise.

As this initiative is relatively recent, there is very little operational experience that we can share. Perhaps a description of a project will provide a flavour of our activities in this area. We are currently funding a project in Thailand in which a Thai research team is assessing whether the present evaluation systems of Thailand in the agriculture and natural resource research sectors are adequate and comprehensive, and whether findings of evaluation studies are used to guide improvements. The research agenda involves a review of evaluations conducted in the above two sectors, the methodologies used, lessons learnt, and institutions and individuals involved in evaluation. An assessment of the linkages between research programs and national development needs will also be made. The Project team's intention is to develop a system that can be used to help streamline

resource allocation, and to provide an assessment of Thailand's agricultural and natural resource programs. The project team expects to find that evaluations have been used in a haphazard and ineffective manner, with some programs receiving careful scrutiny and others never having been evaluated. Identifying the exact nature of the weaknesses in the present approach will provide a useful foundation for developing and introducing a more comprehensive national evaluation system.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have tried to map some trends in the level of evaluation activities and the status of evaluation systems. We have also reviewed some of our operational experiences to meet the needs of IDRC and the Third World. In conclusion, we propose to raise certain issues that require attention.

If our projection of an increase in evaluation activities in the Third World is confirmed, it will be necessary to develop Third World national evaluation capacities. This can be approached in two ways. We can begin to support human resource development in this area, and we can ensure that national program managers are involved in all phases of an evaluation exercise. The latter implies that external donor agencies who have been responsible for a large proportion of formal evaluations must begin to involve national program managers in the selection and conduct of evaluations. Unless national program managers are involved, the results of these evaluations will not be as effectively used as they could be. The present approach we feel encourages excessive focus on meeting the short term objectives of the specific donor supported project rather than the improvement of national research systems. The process of the evaluation can be as important as the product. Furthermore, our experience indicates that user needs for different types of evaluations in different countries are not uniform. We believe emphasis should be placed on encouraging national systems to identify and map out their own needs and to evolve their own evaluation strategies.

The constituency supporting expansion of research in Third World countries is still very limited and the economic pressures on many developing countries have become much more severe since 1980. Unless scientists can demonstrate the payoff from research, there may be little growth in funds in already hard pressed research organizations. In this environment, impact evaluations showing the impact of research on development can play a critical role. In addition, there is considerable evidence that limited utilization of research results is a major constraint. Focussing evaluation activities on assessing both cases where research has been utilized, and where utilization has been limited, could be helpful in identifying and introducing changes in process and organizational relationships which could improve utilization. However, this type of evaluation is both difficult to undertake and costly, therefore such studies must be carefully selected and designed.

We also believe that there is a need to review and analyse specific evaluation findings in order to learn from such experiences instead of starting new evaluation exercises when the occasion warrants. Such analysis can provide a macro view of the nature of development research experiences and will thus facilitate program management. Evaluations should be tailored to meet management needs and should be effective in meeting these needs. Thus the user has paramount status and should be at all times included in the evaluation exercise. It is only by considering these issues that we can continue to foster the use of evaluations for program management.

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